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UNCLAS BRATISLAVA 000300

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: ARCHIVES CHIEF ASSAULTED

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED. PLEASE PROTECT ACCORDINGLY.

1. (SBU) SUMMARY: ON MARCH 23, THREE UNIDENTIFIED ASSAILANTS ATTACKED AND SERIOUSLY INJURED JAN LANGOS, THE HEAD OF THE INSTITUTE OF THE MEMORY OF THE NATION (IMN), WHILE HE WAS WALKING HOME AT MIDNIGHT. THE POLICE ARE INVESTIGATING THE CRIME AS A ROBBERY. NONETHELESS, THE INCIDENT CLOSELY RESEMBLES AN ATTACK ON LANGOS' WIFE LAST YEAR AND COULD BE INTERPRETED AS ANOTHER "WARNING" FROM THOSE WHO MAY FEEL THREATENED BY THE IMN'S ACTIVITIES, WHICH FOCUS ON OPENING THE FORMER COMMUNIST INTELLIGENCE (STB) FILES AND DISCLOSING DETAILS ABOUT STB EMPLOYEES AND CONTACTS. END SUMMARY.

WHAT HAPPENED

2. (U) ON THE NIGHT OF MARCH 23, JAN LANGOS, THE HEAD OF THE IMN AND FORMER CZECHOSLOVAK INTERIOR MINISTER, WAS ATTACKED BY THREE APPARENTLY WELL-TRAINED, MUSCULAR MEN. THE GROUP KNOCKED LANGOS DOWN AND BEAT HIM SERIOUSLY. THEY ALSO BROKE HIS ARM AND FINGERS WHILE PULLING OFF HIS WEDDING RING. HIS WALLET AND MONEY WERE LEFT UNTOUCHED. LANGOS LOST CONSCIOUSNESS DURING THE ATTACK AND WAS UNABLE TO DESCRIBE HIS ASSAILANTS TO THE POLICE.

ROLE OF IMN

3. (U) THE INSTITUTE OF THE MEMORY OF THE NATION WAS ESTABLISHED BY LAW IN 2003. THE IMN'S ROLE IS TO COLLECT, MAINTAIN AND OPEN THE INTELLIGENCE ARCHIVES FROM THE NAZI AND COMMUNIST ERA (1939-89), TO PROSECUTE NAZI AND COMMUNIST CRIMES, AS WELL AS CRIMES AGAINST PEACE, HUMAN DIGNITY AND WAR CRIMES, INCLUDING ALL FORMS OF POLITICALLY-BASED REPRESSION. SDKU PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE AND FOREIGN MINISTER EDUARD KUKAN, WHOSE FORMER SCHOOLMATE ANONYMOUSLY ACCUSED HIM IN THE PRESS OF HAVING TIES TO THE STB, IS AMONG THOSE WHO HAVE REQUESTED DISCLOSURE OF THEIR FILES. PARLIAMENT ELECTED LANGOS CHAIRMAN OF THE INSTITUTE BOARD IN APRIL 2003.

4. (SBU) THE DAY BEFORE THE VOTE, LANGOS' WIFE GABRIELA WAS BEATEN AND SERIOUSLY INJURED IN PRAGUE, WHERE SHE RESIDES. THE PERPETRATORS LEFT HER PURSE UNTOUCHED. ANOTHER INCIDENT OCCURRED IN THE FALL OF 2003 WHEN A CAR FROM THE PRIVATE SECURITY SERVICE SECURITON HIT GABRIELA'S CAR AT HIGH SPEED, IN A WAY THAT RESEMBLED THE WELL-KNOWN ACCIDENTS STAGED BY COMMUNIST INTELLIGENCE IN THE PAST. THE POLICE NEVER COMPLETED THE INVESTIGATION OF THIS CAR ACCIDENT.

LANGOS - FORMER DISSIDENT AND COMMUNIST-HUNTER

5. (SBU) LANGOS IS A WELL-KNOWN FORMER DISSIDENT, ANTI-COMMUNIST, AND LONGTIME EMBASSY CONTACT. HE INITIATED SLOVAKIA'S FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT AND OTHER TRANSPARENCY ACTS. HE ALSO ORCHESTRATED THE OPENING OF THE COMMUNIST AND NAZI INTELLIGENCE FILES. AS THE CZECHOSLOVAK MINISTER OF INTERIOR IN 1990, LANGOS DISSOLVED THE COMMUNIST INTELLIGENCE SERVICE (STB) AND ENDORSED THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A LUSTRATION LAW THAT WOULD HAVE BANNED COMMUNIST PARTY FUNCTIONARIES AND STB OFFICERS FROM SERVING IN PUBLIC OFFICES. MECIAR'S GOVERNMENT, HOWEVER, FAILED TO ENACT THIS LAW. LANGOS IS COMMITTED TO EXPOSING THE CRIMES COMMITTED UNDER COMMUNIST RULE.

NO REACTION FROM INTERIOR MINISTRY

6. (SBU) TO DATE, THE INTERIOR MINISTRY HAS MADE NO PUBLIC STATEMENT ABOUT THE BEATING, AND AN OFFICIAL TOLD POL FSN ON MARCH 26 THAT THE INCIDENT IS BEING TREATED AS A STREET CRIME UNTIL THE POLICE INVESTIGATION PROVES OTHERWISE. WHEN ASKED ABOUT INTERIOR MINISTER VLADIMIR PALKO'S REACTION, HIS ADVISOR JAROSLAV DANISKA TOLD THE EMBASSY THAT HE WOULD ENCOURAGE PALKO TO MAKE A PUBLIC STATEMENT CONDEMNING VIOLENCE TOWARD LANGOS. THE AMBASSADOR SENT A LETTER TO LANGOS CONDEMNING THE ACT OF VIOLENCE AND EXPRESSING SUPPORT. LANGOS TOLD EMBOFFS THAT HE HIGHLY VALUES THE USG SUPPORT AND WILL CONTINUE HIS WORK IN SPITE OF THE ATTACK.

COMMENT

7. (SBU) COMMENT: ALTHOUGH THE ABOVE INCIDENTS MIGHT BE CONSTRUED AS RANDOM ACTS OF VIOLENCE, THEY BEAR THE UNMISTAKABLE HALLMARK OF THE FORMER COMMUNIST INTELLIGENCE SERVICE, WHICH USED TO WARN ITS ADVERSARIES WITH STAGED CAR INCIDENTS AND VIOLENT STREET CRIMES. THERE IS A CHANCE THAT THESE THREE INCIDENTS MIGHT BE UNRELATED, BUT THEY MAY BE ATTEMPTS TO DISCOURAGE THE INSTITUTE

AND LANGOS AS WELL AS TO DEMORALIZE THE STAFF. NOW THAT THE LAW
ALLOWS OPENING THE COMMUNIST FILES, A NUMBER OF FORMER OFFICIALS
MAY FEEL THEIR REPUTATIONS ARE IN JEOPARDY. THESE EVENTS COULD
HAVE BEEN ORCHESTRATED BY INDIVIDUALS OR GROUPS WHO FEEL
THREATENED BY THE IMN OR COULD BE ACTS OF PERSONAL REVENGE.

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